

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification ~~as~~ follows:

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Before "BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION" insert:

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

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This application is a divisional of U.S. Patent Application No. 08/706,491, filed September 4, 1996, now U.S. Patent No. 5,937,395. A1

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 24-28, 33-36, 41, 43, 46, 49, and 50-52 as shown below. A marked-up version showing the amendments is included in the attached APPENDIX. For the Examiner's convenience, all of the pending claims are presented below, regardless of whether the claim is currently being amended.

24. (Amended) An accounting method comprising:

a step of inputting money information indicating an amount of money recorded on a recording medium;

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a step of judging the money information input from said input means and outputting a permission signal for permitting a use of electronic information provided by an information provider; and

a step of processing so as to enable use of the electronic information provided by the information provider in accordance with the permission signal.

25. (Amended) A method according to Claim 24, wherein the electronic information to be provided is enciphered.

26. (Amended) A method according to Claim 25, wherein said step of processing comprises a process of decoding the enciphered electronic information.

27. (Amended) A method according to Claim 24, wherein said step of judging judges the money information in accordance with the money information and use charge information added to the electronic information to be provided.

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28. (Amended) An information receiving method for receiving information provided by an information provider, comprising:

a step of inputting money information indicating an amount of money recorded on a recording medium;

a step of judging the money information input from said input means and outputting a permission signal for permitting a use of electronic information provided by an information provider; and

a step of processing so as to enable use of the electronic information provided by the information provider in accordance with the permission signal.

29. A method according to Claim 28, wherein said judging step judges the money information in accordance with the money information and use charge information added to the provided information.

30. A method according to Claim 28, wherein said money information is cash.

31. A method according to Claim 28, wherein said money information is recorded in a recording medium.

32. A method according to Claim 28, further comprising communication means for transmitting use information of the provided information.

33. (Amended) A communication method comprising:

a step of providing information including first money information from an electronic information provider terminal;

a step of receiving and using electronic information provided by said electronic information provider terminal and second money information; and

a step of comparing the first money information and the second money information and outputting a permission signal for permitting a use of the electronic information provider terminal according to a result of the comparison; and

a step of processing so as to enable use of said electronic information provided by an information provider in accordance with the permission signal.

34. (Amended) A method according to claim 33, wherein the electronic information is enciphered and wherein said step of processing comprises a step of decoding the enciphered electronic information.

35. (Amended) A method according to Claim 33, wherein at least one of the first money information and the second money information is cash..

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36. (Amended) A method according to Claim 33, wherein at least one of the first money information and the second money information is recorded in a recording medium.

37. A method according to Claim 33, further comprising a communication step of transmitting use information of the provided information.

38. A method according to Claim 37, further comprising a charge distributor step of transmitting charge distribution information to said information provider terminal in accordance with the use information.

39. A method according to Claim 37, further comprising a charge accommodating step of performing accommodation of a use charge of the provided information in accordance with the use information.

40. A method according to Claim 33, wherein cipher communication is performed between said terminals.

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cont

41. (Amended) A method for accounting, comprising the steps of:
inputting first data indicating an amount of money;

inputting second data regarding electronic information subscribed from an information provider to a terminal via a network;

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judging whether a use of the electronic information at the terminal can be permitted or not, in accordance with the first and second data; and

processing so as to enable use of the electronic information provided by the information provider in accordance with the judging.

42. A method according to Claim 41, wherein said second data includes a use charge, and said judging step judges a use permission of the information by comparing the amount of money and the use charge.

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43. (Amended) A method according to Claim 41, wherein said first data includes data indicating a type of a recording medium in which said first data is recorded, and said judging step judges a use permission of the information in accordance with the data indicating the type.

44. A method according to Claim 41, further comprising a step of rewriting the amount of money in response to a judgment operation of said judging step.

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45. A method according to Claim 41, further comprising a step of outputting a use state of the information to the external of the device in response to a judgment operation of said judging step.

46. (Amended) A program storage medium readable by a computer, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the computer to perform an accounting method, said method comprising the steps of:

36 inputting money information indicating an amount of money recorded on a recording medium;

judging the money information inputted in said input step and outputting a permission signal for permitting a use of electronic information provided by an information provider; and

processing so as to enable use of the electronic information provided by the information provider in accordance with the permission signal.

47. A program storage medium according to Claim 46, wherein said recording medium includes a card-type recording medium.

48. A program storage medium according to Claim 47, wherein said card-type recording medium includes a pre-paid card.

49. (Amended) An accounting program storage medium readable by a computer, comprising the following steps of:

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Cont inputting first data indicating a first amount of money;

inputting second data regarding electronic information subscribed from an information provider to a terminal via a network;

judging whether a use of the electronic information can be permitted or not, in accordance with the first and second data; and

processing so as to enable use of the electronic information provided by the information provider in accordance with the judging.

50. (Amended) An accounting program storage medium readable by a computer, comprising following steps of:

obtaining first data indicating a first amount of money;

obtaining second data indicating a second amount of money regarding electronic information provided from an information provider;

judging whether a use of the electronic information can be permitted or not, in accordance with the first and second data;

processing so as to enable use of the electronic information provided by the information provider in accordance with the judging;

rewriting the amount of money in the first data based on the judgment operation, and

notifying the judgment result of a use permission.

51. (Amended) A transaction system comprising:

a provider which provides electronic information with a price data of the electronic information,

a device which obtains money data recorded on a recording medium and the electronic information with the price data, in which the money data is compared with the price

data to judge if the money amount is enough for use the electronic information, wherein the device rewrites the money data based on a use of the electronic information and outputs the price corresponding to the use of the electronic information, and performs processing so as to enable use of the electronic information provided by the information provider in accordance with the judging; and

an administrative terminal which sums up the price outputted from the terminal device for each information and notifies results of summing up for each information respectively to the information provider which provides the information.

52. (Amended) A transaction system according to Claim 51, wherein said information provider, said terminal device and said administrative terminal are connected via a network.

53. A transaction system according to Claim 51, wherein said recording medium is a pre-paid card.

Please add new Claims ~~54-81~~ as follows:

--54. A method according to claim 24, wherein the money information is cash.

55. A method according to claim 24, wherein the money information is recorded in a recording medium.

56. A method according to claim 34, wherein the money information is cash.

57. A method according to claim 33, wherein said comparing step judges the money information in accordance with the money information and use charge information added to the provided information.

58. A method according to claim 41, wherein the electronic information to be provided is enciphered.

59. A method according to claim 58, wherein the processing comprises a process of decoding the enciphered electronic information.

60. A program storage medium according to claim 46, wherein the electronic information to be provided is enciphered.

61. A program storage medium according to claim 60, wherein the process comprises a process of decoding the enciphered electronic information.

62. A transaction system according to claim 51, wherein the electronic information to be provided is enciphered.

63. A transaction system according to claim 62, wherein the process comprises a process of decoding the enciphered electronic information.

64. An accounting apparatus comprising:

means for inputting money information indicating an amount of money recorded on a recording medium;

means for judging the money information input from said input means out outputting a permission signal for permitting a use of electronic information provided by an information provider; and

means for processing so as to enable use of the electronic information provided by the information provider in accordance with the permission signal.

65. An apparatus according to claim 64, wherein the electronic information to be provided is enciphered.

66. An apparatus according to claim 65, wherein the process comprises a process of decoding the enciphered electronic information.

67. An apparatus according to claim 64, wherein said judging means judges the money information in accordance with the money information and use charge information added to the provided information.

68. An apparatus according to claim 64, wherein the money information is cash.

69. An apparatus according to claim 64, wherein the money information is recorded in a recording medium.

(70) An information receiving apparatus for receiving information provided by an information provider, comprising:

means for inputting money information indicating an amount of money recorded on a recording medium;

means for judging the money information input from said input means and outputting a permission signal for permitting a use of electronic information provided by an information provider; and

means for processing so as to enable use of the electronic information provided by an information provider in accordance with the permission signal.

71. An apparatus according to claim 70, wherein said judging means judges the money information in accordance with the money information and use charge information added to the provided information.

72. An apparatus according to claim 70, wherein the money information is cash.

73. An apparatus according to claim 70, wherein the money information is recorded in a recording medium.

74. An apparatus according to claim 70, further comprising communication means for transmitting use information of the provided information.

(75.) An accounting apparatus, comprising:

means for inputting first data indicating an amount of money;

means for inputting second data regarding electronic information subscribed from an information provider to a terminal via a network;

means for judging whether a use of the electronic information at the terminal can be permitted or not, in accordance with the first and second data; and

means for processing so as to enable use of the electronic information provided by the information provider in accordance with the judging.

76. An apparatus according to claim 75, wherein the electronic information to be provided is enciphered.

77. An apparatus according to claim 76, wherein the processing comprises a process of decoding the enciphered electronic information.

78. An apparatus according to claim 75, wherein the second data includes a use charge, and said judging means judges a use permission of the information by comparing the amount of money and the use charge.

79. An apparatus according to claim 75, wherein the first data includes data indicating a type of a recording medium in which the first data is recorded, and said judging means judges a use permission of the information in accordance with the data indicating the type.